

Modern United States Presidents

What you need to know for the US-VA History Test in Virginia



President Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Franklin Delano Roosevelt was the President of the United States during two enormous crossroads in American History: **The Great Depression** and **World War II**. While he was the President:

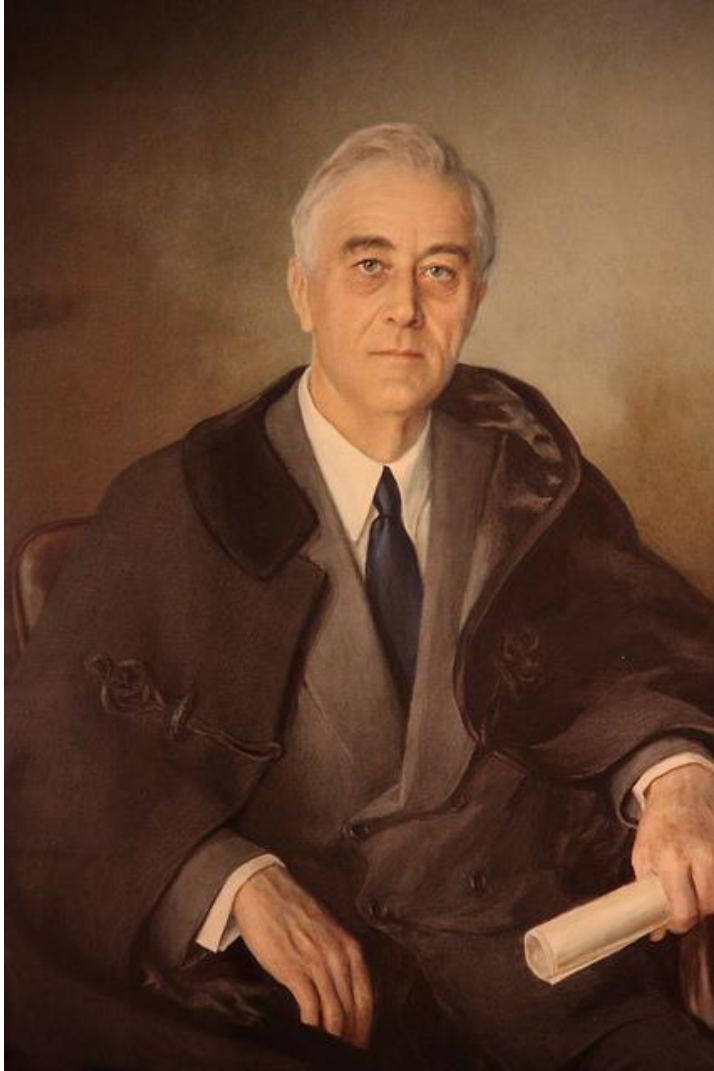
- **The New Deal** programs were passed in order to combat the Great Depression.
- The **Lend-Lease Act** was passed, the **Atlantic Charter** was signed, and the US moved closer to participation in World War II.
- **Pearl Harbor** was bombed on a “date that will live in infamy,” December 7th, 1941, and the US entered World War II against the Axis Powers.
- **D-Day** took place, on June 6th, 1944, and American soldiers liberated Europe.



President of the United States, 1933 – 1945

- The Great Depression
- World War II

Terms to Associate with FDR



- **The New Deal** – Roosevelt’s programs to help needy Americans, provide jobs for the unemployed, and prevent future recessions.
- **“The only thing we have to fear is fear itself!”** This quote is from FDR’s First Inaugural Address and it has to do with the Banking Crisis!
- **Supreme Court Packing Plan** – FDR proposed adding six new justices to the Supreme Court to tilt the balance of power on the Court in his favor. This was angrily denounced by the American people and the Congress.
- **World War II** – Cash and Carry; Lend-Lease Act; Atlantic Charter; and war against the Axis Powers.

President Harry S Truman



President of the United States, 1945 – 1953

- World War II
- The Cold War

Harry S. Truman became President when Franklin Delano Roosevelt passed away at the end of World War II.

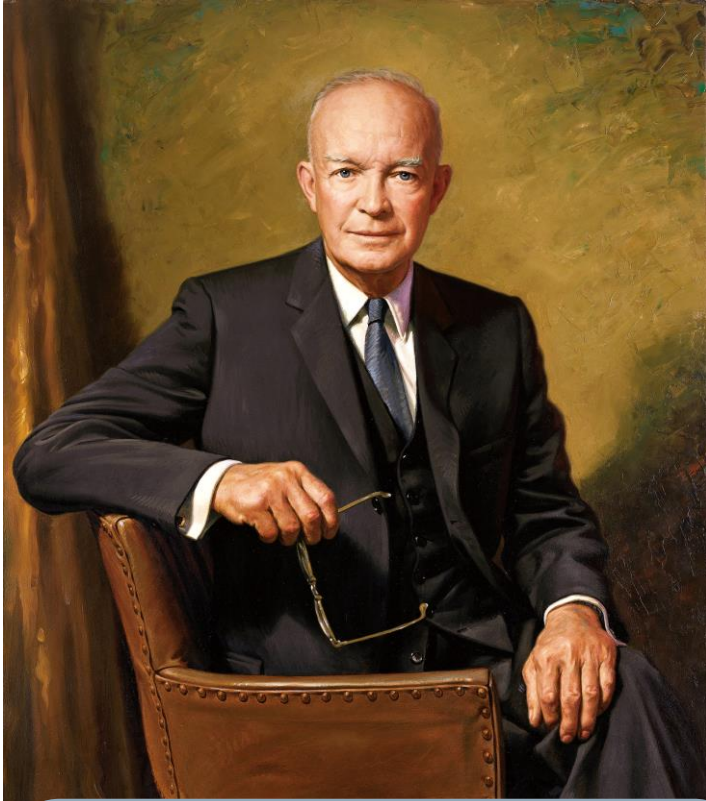
- He authorized the use of the atomic bombs that were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, at the end of World War II.
- While he was President, the US military was integrated, ending segregation against African-Americans in the US Armed Services.
- After World War II came to an end, he was committed to containment, authorizing the Berlin Airlift, the Truman Plan, and the Marshall Plan to reconstruct Europe.
- While he was President, the Korean War began; he fired General Douglas MacArthur for refusing to obey orders.

Terms to Associate with Truman



- *The Manhattan Project and the Atomic Bomb* – Hiroshima 1945.
- *Desegregation of the US Military* by Executive Order, 1948.
- *The Policy of Containment* – stopping the spread of communism with using all of the policies below.
 - The Truman Doctrine
 - The Marshall Plan
 - The Berlin Airlift
 - The Korean War

President Dwight David Eisenhower



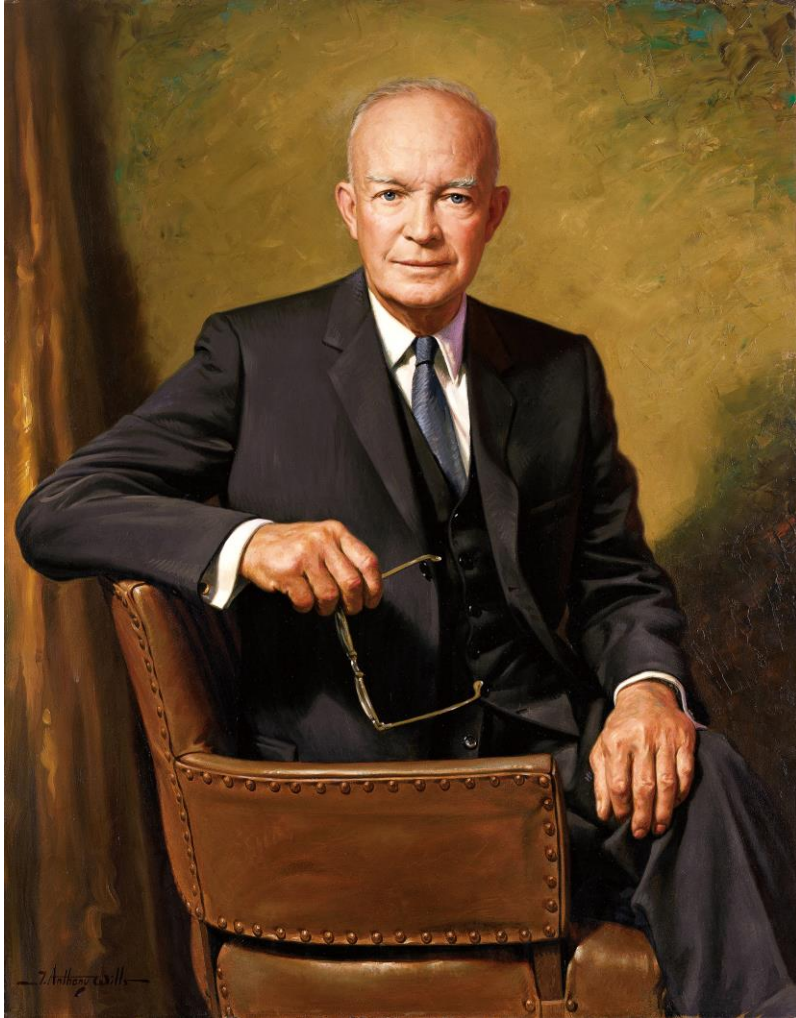
President of the United States, 1953 – 1961

- The Cold War Era
- The Civil Rights Movement

After leading the D-Day Invasion at Normandy, France, **Eisenhower** ran for President in 1952 and won.

- He believed in **“Massive Retaliation”** with nuclear missiles to insure US Defense.
- He sent federal troops to Little Rock, Arkansas to integrate Central High School when the **“Little Rock Nine”** needed help.
- He supported the Supreme Court in enforcing the **Brown V. Board of Education, Topeka, KS** ruling.
- He created the **Eisenhower Interstate Highway System**.

Terms to Associate with Eisenhower



- *The D-Day Invasion* – He was the commander for Operation Overlord.
- He appointed Chief Justice Earl Warren and enforced his ruling in *Brown V. Board of Education, Topeka, KS.*
- The *Eisenhower Interstate Highway System.*
- *Dangerous Policies of the Cold War Era:*
 - Brinksmanship
 - Massive Retaliation
 - Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD)

President John F. Kennedy



President of the United States, 1961 – 1963

- The Cold War Era
- The Vietnam War
- The Civil Rights Movement

The assassination of **President John F. Kennedy** broke Americans hearts.

- JFK had been the President when the **Bay of Pigs Invasion failed in Cuba.**
- He was President when the Berlin Wall was constructed, imprisoning the people of East Germany. He went to Berlin and stated, **“Ich bein ein Berliner!”**
- The **Cuban Missile Crisis** brought the United States to the brink of nuclear war; his leadership helped to prevent a disaster.
- **Martin Luther King, Jr.** delivered the **“I Have A Dream”** speech at the March on Washington for Jobs and freedom. JFK proposed the Civil Right Act immediately afterwards.
- **“Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country!”** Kennedy believed in public service and founded the Peace Corps for that purpose.

Terms to Associate with JFK



- ***“Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.”*** First Inaugural Address, 1961.
- JFK’s programs were called the ***“New Frontier.”*** He saw opportunities to end poverty and need globally, and to end discrimination at home. He also challenged Americans to ***land a man on the moon*** and return him safely to the Earth. (Accomplished in July, 1969, during Nixon’s Presidency.)
- ***The Civil Rights Act*** – proposed under JFK after the Birmingham protests in the summer of 1963; passed under LBJ.
- ***Bay of Pigs Invasion*** and ***Cuban Missile Crisis.***
- ***Assassinated*** in November of 1963 by Lee Harvey Oswald.

President Lyndon Baines Johnson



President of the United States, 1963 – 1969

- The Civil Rights Movement
- The Cold War: Vietnam

President Lyndon Johnson might have been remembered as the nation's greatest domestic President for his Great Society Programs, were it not for the Vietnam War.

- Medicaid and Medicare were passed, to give health care to the old and too the poor.
- The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed providing equal rights for African-Americans and women.
- The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was passed.

The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution was passed to escalate the War in Vietnam, and after four years of fighting, the Tet Offensive convinced many Americans that we were mired in a stalemate.

Terms to associate with LBJ



- **Escalation** of the **Vietnam War**, starting in 1964 with the **Gulf of Tonkin Resolution**.
- The **Civil Rights Act of 1964**, signed into law after LBJ spoke out in support of Martin Luther King, Jr.
- The **Voting Rights Act of 1965**, enacted in support of the Civil Rights Movement.
- **The Tet Offensive**, a turning point in the Vietnam War, when Americans began to believe that the war was never going to end.
- Refusal to run for re-election in 1968, due to malaise of Vietnam War.

President Richard M. Nixon



President of the United States, 1969 – 1974

- The Cold War Era
- The Vietnam War Era
- Watergate Scandal

President **Richard M. Nixon** was elected in 1968 and in 1972, but was forced to resign from office in 1974.

- He opened **China** to trade by visiting the nation in 1972.
- Although he promised that he had a secret plan to end the Vietnam War – **“Vietnamization”** took over six years, and he still had not withdrawn American forces when he left office.
- He engaged in **détente** with the USSR, and signed the **SALT I** Treaty to begin arms control. Relations with the USSR and China improved dramatically while he was the President.
- Nixon as forced to resign due to the **Watergate Scandal**. He had hired burglars to break into the Democrats offices at the Watergate Hotel in Washington, D.C.

Terms to Associate with Nixon



- **Watergate** – the scandal which brought down a President. It's only happened once in all American history, but Richard Nixon was forced to resign.
- **Détente** – an easing of tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union, which Nixon helped to bring on with his foreign policy choices.
- **Hawks and Doves** – During the Vietnam War, there were enormous conflicts between those who supported the Vietnam War (Hawks) and those who despised it (Doves.)
- **Equal Rights Amendment (E.R.A.)** – proposed amendment which would have given women equality under the law; it was never ratified.

President Gerald Ford



President of the United States,
1974 – 1977

- Never Elected POTUS

President Gerald Ford is the accidental President if there ever was one. He was not elected.

- Ford became President after both Vice President Spiro Agnew and President Richard Nixon resigned.
- Ford *pardoned Richard Nixon* for the crimes he committed during the Watergate Scandal.
- The United States finally completed its *withdrawal from Vietnam* during Ford's time in office.

He ran for office in 1976, the nation's bicentennial year, but lost.

President Jimmy Carter



President James “Jimmy” Carter was a “one-termer.” While he was President –

- The *Iran Hostage Crisis* took place.
- Americans suffered through an *Energy Crisis*.
- The United States fell into *recession*.
- The policies of *détente* continued with the USSR and the *SALT II Treaty* was signed with the Soviets.
- The USA *boycotted the Olympics* in Moscow in 1980 to protest the fact that the Soviet Union (USSR) had invaded Afghanistan.

President Ronald Reagan



President of the United States, 1981 – 1989

- The Cold War Ends

- While *Ronald Reagan* was the President the Cold War began to come to its conclusion.
- Reagan called the *Soviet Union an “Evil Empire,”* and then negotiated to reduce the dangers of nuclear weapons with Michael Gorbachev.
- He *increased military spending*, constantly putting pressure on the USSR to keep up.
- *“Reaganomics”* called for *cutting taxes on the rich to increase business prosperity*. (Even his Vice President, George H.W. Bush called this “Voodoo Economics.”)
- *“Government is not the solution to the nation’s problems. Government is the problem!”* - President Ronald Reagan

Terms to Associate with Reagan



- **Conservatism** – Reagan redefined the nature of “conservatism” in American politics, urging people shrink the size of government and lower dependency on government agencies. (And then increased the size of government and dramatically ramped up spending.)
- **The Iran-Contra Scandal-** Weapons were sold to Iran to fund a war against communism in Nicaragua.
- **Summit Meetings with Mikhail Gorbachev help to end the Cold War.**
- **The PATCO Strike** – Reagan fired any air traffic controller who walked out on strike, busting up the union.

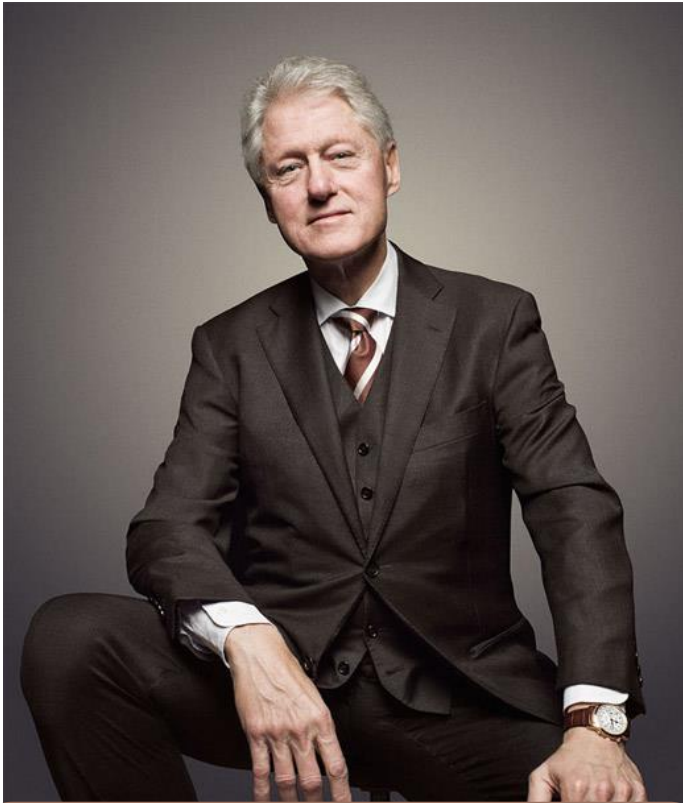
President George H.W. Bush



This was the first George Bush, and, although he only served one term, most would say, the better Bush.

- The Cold War came to an end when the Soviet Union collapsed.
- The Berlin Wall was torn down, and Germany reunified.
- The United States conducted the Persian Gulf War in order to liberate the republic of Kuwait and stop Saddam Hussein's aggression.

President William Jefferson Clinton



President of the United States, 1993 – 2001

As the President of the United States, ***Bill Clinton*** was responsible for -

- Approving NAFTA – the ***North American Free Trade Agreement***.
- He was the President who ***recognized Vietnam*** for the first time since the war ended. Relations improved.
- He also ***recognized*** the government of ***Nelson Mandela's in South Africa***, the first government there after apartheid (all white rule) had come to an end.

While President, he organized a ***NATO air attack*** on regions of the former ***Yugoslavia*** to end the “ethnic cleansing” and genocide which was taking place there.

President George W. Bush, JR.



President of the United States, 2001 – 2009

The War on Terror

George W. Bush was elected in 2000 and served from 2001 – 2009.

- During his first year in office, the **September 11** terrorist attacks occurred.
- As President, he directed the US military during the **War in Afghanistan** began to punish Al-Qaeda, the terrorist group which had been harbored there.
- **The Iraq War** began to oust Saddam Hussein – after Bush had directed false accusations at the murderous dictator.
- **The Patriot Act** was passed to investigate possible terrorism suspects. I seems also to violate the 4th Amendment.

President Barack Obama



President of the United States, 2009 – 2017

- Obamacare
- The War on Terror

During current **President Barack Obama's** administration –

- The **Affordable Care Act (Obamacare)** went into effect.
- **Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden was killed** by US Navy Seals in Pakistan.
- The **Stimulus Package** was passed to lessen the impact of the “Great Recession.”
- **The Iraq War** came to a close.
- The **War in Afghanistan** continued.
- The prison at **Guantanamo Bay** in Cuba remained open.

President Donald J. Trump



President of the United States, 2017 - Present:

Goals of the Trump Administration:

- “Make America Great Again!”
- Build a wall on Mexican border to stop illegal immigration.
- Bilateral Trade Agreements.
- Repeal and Replace Obamacare.
- Tax Reform